

RESOURCES

NATURE, HISTORY AND HORTICULTURE IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

VOLUME 5, NO. 2 SPRING 2005

FLYING COLORS

By Growing Native, You Can Create a Backyard Haven for Birds

Contributor: Lee Ann Kinser, Park Volunteer

It's such a delight to look out the window and see ruby-red cardinals, bluebirds, goldfinches, and robins. Seeing them in our own backyards is one of the true joys of Virginia living. The time has come, however, for us to help our native birds.

Many of our beautiful Virginia bird species are in decline in Fairfax County. Phoebees, peewees, wood thrushes, scarlet tanagers, indigo buntings, most sparrows and warblers, and so many, many more are becoming strangers to us. Rapid development and diminishing forests have taken their toll upon what was once a continuous natural corridor along which birds and other wildlife could thrive. The good news is that homeowners can take action to stem this decline. How? — By growing native plants. The National Wildlife Federation estimates that plants and trees native to Virginia support our birds and wildlife up to 50 times more than non-native plants.

Birds consume a vast array of foods — flowers, fruit, seeds, nuts, sap, shrubs, vines, grasses, and even some plants that gardeners may consider weeds. Birds also consume insects, worms, eggs, larvae, carrion, and game. Although this may sound like a broad menu, some species are fussy eaters with definite preferences, while others have a less discriminating palate. They also eat with the seasons; for example, during the late spring and summer, insects compose the largest part of many bird diets, but that changes as fruits begin to ripen.

So when selecting an assortment of native plants and trees, remember that the more varied the plantings, the more varied the wildlife they will support. This includes providing birds with shelter from predators and weather and for their nesting sites. A mixture of plantings of various heights best serves wildlife needs. Trees and shrubs are most valuable to birds because their thick cover provides the best protection. Plants with thorns, such as hawthorns and roses are good; needle- and broad-leaved trees and shrubs offer the best year-round support and protection for birds, especially if they are also food-bearing.

Other, perhaps less aesthetic elements are also appreciated by birds and other wildlife. A brush pile can solve a homeowner's problem of disposal and will also provide cover and nesting sites. Tall grass and patches of "weeds" will shelter ground-nesting birds and offer insects for food. Snags (standing dead trees) and dead limbs (as long as they're not a safety hazard), provide insects, larvae and nest

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NATURE AND HISTORY SUMMER CAMPS

For Glorious Summer Days Like They Ought to Be

No child should grow up without a few summer days exploring the woods or experiencing the wistful joy of the olden days. Here are some of the delightful camps the county offers for children at beautiful Riverbend, Ellanor C. Lawrence, Colvin Run Mill and Frying Pan Parks. (So much fun, they won't even miss their computers!)

For more information about these wonderful camps including dates and times, call **703-481-9444** (Katydid Inc). To register, call **703-222-4664**.

You can also register online by going to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/funcamps.htm and click on Nature Camps or Specialty Camps.



Tracks Through Nature & History (6-10 yrs)

At Riverbend Park (Great Falls) and Ellanor C. Lawrence Park (Chantilly)

These parks are a natural summer wonderland for children. Each park's rich resources — woodland trails, streams, ponds, wildlife and gardens, are waiting to be explored in this unique camping adventure. Camp forms are available on website (see above). Bring lunch and drink.

Tracks Through Nature & History (3-5 yrs)

At Riverbend Park (Great Falls)

Young children will get a chance to enjoy nature through exciting daily themes and activities including songs, games, crafts, hikes and stories. Children must be potty trained and three-years-old by June 1st.



Local Heritage Camp (6-10 yrs)

At Colvin Run Mill (Great Falls)

Campers will step back in time to the 19th century and a community centered around an operating gristmill. Activities include playing old-fashioned games, cranking home-made ice cream, history scavenger hunts, tours of the historic building, crafts and baking using the flour ground at the mill. Activities are the same session to session. No camp on July 4th.

Young Pioneer Camp (6-10 yrs)

At Frying Pan Park (Herndon)



Jump back in time to a working farm of the 1930s! Campers will get a unique experience as they enjoy new themes, crafts, games, hikes, cooking projects and more. Children will be introduced to goat milking, animal grooming and other hands-on demonstrations. Activities are the same each session. Children must have completed kindergarten. Two-week camps offered at a great discount.

Fun on the Farm (3-5 yrs)

At Frying Pan Park (Herndon)

Preschoolers are introduced to a 1930s working farm. Activities include visits with the farm animals, nature walks, arts and crafts, songs and games. New themes this year! Held at the Old Floris Schoolhouse on the park grounds. Children must be potty trained and three-years-old by June 1st. No camp on July 4th. (Read more about Frying Pan Park on p.6.)

Burke Lake Park
7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station
Call 703-323-6600

Colvin Run Mill
10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls
Call 703-759-2771

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park
5040 Walney Road, Chantilly
Call 703-631-0013

Frying Pan Park
2709 West Ox Road, Herndon
Call 703-437-9101

Green Spring Gardens Park
4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria
Call 703-642-5173

Hidden Oaks Nature Center
7701 Royce Street, Annandale
Call 703-941-1065

Hidden Pond Nature Center
8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield
Call 703-451-9588

Huntley Meadows Park
3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria
Call 703-768-2525

Lake Accotink Park
7500 Accotink Park Rd., Springfield
Call 703-569-3464

Lake Fairfax Park
1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston
Call 703-471-5414

Riverbend Park
8700 Potomac Hills Street
Great Falls
Call 703-759-9018

Sully Historic Site
Sully Road, Chantilly
Call 703-437-1794

Need directions or more information?

VISIT

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

RESOURCES

Editor/Writer: Natasha Peterson
Photos: Don Sweeney
Administration: Linda Crone
Production: Innovative Projects, Inc.

Published quarterly by the Fairfax County Park Authority, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035-1118.
Available at park sites and Fairfax County libraries.

Visit **ResOURces** online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources

♻️ **ResOURces** is printed on 100% recycled paper.

*We make a living by what we do,
we make a life by what we give.*

– Winston Churchill

A big THANK YOU to our incredible volunteers!
National Volunteer Week, April 17-23, 2005

Calling All True Blue Green Thumbs

The Walney Garden Guild

Special events, public programs, garden planning, grant writing, an annual trip and yes, weeding and watering — the lively Walney Garden Guild at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park (ECLP) invites you to be part of their year-long garden party! The Guild is kicking off the new growing season with an orientation meeting on April 7th and will hold regular meetings and activities throughout the year. In addition to gardeners, they also need people who have an interest in developing events, public education, planning future growth for the gardens, writing materials and much more.

Although ECLP has had gardening volunteers for the past 20 years, the Guild is newly organized with a full agenda. The staff at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park has developed a new vision for the interpretive gardens at Walney Visitor Center. Walney's unique qualities as a site are not only due to its functional history as a 19th century farm,

but as a land area which has been continuously and repeatedly defined and impacted by historic events including the Civil War, agriculture and the growth of Fairfax County. The site is representative of the dynamic confluence of culture and nature — humankind's reliance upon and struggles with the natural world — past, present, and future.

For the interpretive gardens at Walney, the Guild will help create a comprehensive program for addressing a number of learning objectives, engaging volunteers in meaningful and long-term projects, expanding revenue for the park, and preserving the agricultural and horticultural heritage of Walney.

Come and join this delightful group of volunteers. No experience in gardening is required. We do ask that volunteers contribute at least six hours per month during the growing season. All ages are welcome. If interested, call Katarina Spears at 703-631-0013, ext. 201.

See Page 11 for More Volunteer Opportunities ▶

Equal Access/ Special Accommodations

The Fairfax County Park Authority is committed to equal access in all programs and services. Special accommodations will be provided upon request. Please call the ADA/ Access coordinator at 703-324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the date services are needed.

ADA/Access Coordinator
703-324-8563 • TTY 703-803-3354
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm

Are You New to Fairfax County?

Discover our area's beautiful forests, gardens and historical sites. What better way to enjoy our county's rich history and natural resources? When you visit our county parks, you become part of them and begin your own family history in Northern Virginia.

What's RMD?

RMD stands for Resource Management Division. It is the part of the Park Authority responsible for natural, historical and horticultural resources.

WERE YOU AN OUTDOORS KIND OF KID?

When you were little, did you love running around outside wild and happy with your friends? Did you love exploring the woods, tuned in to the bugs, trees and animals? Did you love telling stories around the campfire about days of yore? **Was that a resounding YES?**

Then you may be a natural-born park volunteer and/or heritage interpreter. When you volunteer, you join hundreds of dedicated (and fun!) folks who share your passion for nature and Virginia's rich history. Call your local park listed on page 2, or call/email the following Volunteer Coordinators:

Volunteering

erin.chernisky
@fairfaxcounty.gov
703-324-8750

Interpretive Services

mona.enquist-
johnston@fairfaxcounty.gov
703-324-8750

Archaeology and Collections Cultural Resource Protection

robert.wharton
@fairfaxcounty.gov
703-534-3881

Master Gardeners Program

Community Horticulture
703-642-0128

The Birder's Exchange

By Marianne Mooney

For a birder, there's no greater thrill than traveling to a tropical country such as Costa Rica and seeing its spectacular birds through a good pair of binoculars or a scope. And spotting neotropical migratory birds here at home as they return each spring is one of the thrills of North American birding.

As you search the treetops for warblers, thrushes and tanagers, remember that these birds winter in Central and South America and that you can help in their preservation through the Birder's Exchange.

Over the last few decades, there has been a steady decline in the populations of more than 130 species of neotropical migrants that breed in North America and winter in the Central and South American tropics. Compounding the problem, many conservationists, educators and researchers working on avian (bird) conservation issues in poor tropical countries have woefully bad optics or none at all.

The Birder's Exchange, coordinated by the American Birding Association or ABA, will help solve this problem by putting donated binoculars, other used optics and birding books directly into the hands of those who protect birds and provide environmental education to their fellow citizens in Latin America. In this way, Birder's Exchange promotes conservation at a grassroots level across the western hemisphere.

The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park will be running a drive this April and May to collect the following items to donate to Birder's Exchange (all optics should be in good working order, and please attach your name and address):

- ❖ used binoculars
- ❖ field guides and ornithology texts
- ❖ spotting scopes
- ❖ backpacks
- ❖ tripods
- ❖ laptop computers

Flying Colors continued from page 1

cavities. Even an area of dry dirt provides the "dust baths" that some birds use to control parasites. Patches of leaf litter create a good mulch that offers insects and worms to insect-eaters. And don't rush to dead-head plants since many of the seeds will be eaten in the late fall or winter.

Most important, however, is to reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides, which can poison and kill birds. Working toward organic gardening practices will guide your yard's ecosystem toward a natural balance and will help to fill it with "flying colors."

Fairfax County's nature centers (Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Hidden Oaks, Hidden Pond, Huntley Meadows, and Riverbend Park) are bird sanctuaries that feature many delightful birding programs. Classes and information about organic gardening can be found at Green Spring Gardens Park Horticultural Center. See page 2 to call the parks and learn more.



The Huntley Meadows Friends group will take care of shipping the donations to the ABA, which in turn will send them to conservationists in Latin America.

The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park are hoping for a great response to this drive from all the generous birders in our area.

Where to bring or send your donation during April and May

Huntley Meadows Park Visitor's Center
 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306
 703-768-2525 ❖ www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley/
 (Open daily, closed Tuesdays, hours vary.)

For more information on the Birder's Exchange program, go to www.americanbirding.org/bex, or email Marianne Mooney, board member of the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, at m.mooney@comcast.net.

Which birds, what parks? Find local birds and wildflowers on ResOURces Online. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources and click on Nature Finder. You can use the Nature Finder database to find specific birds and wildflowers, or link to the birding database at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park.

Here are some of the benefits of growing native from master gardener Pat Henley at Green Spring Gardens Park:

There are so many good reasons to grow native and banish invasive plants. Invasives dominate and eventually change the habitat, impacting and even destroying existing plants and the animals that depend on them. A once-thriving diverse natural community of plants, animals and insects can be reduced to a stretch of a single invasive species. And it's costly. In the U.S., millions of dollars are spent annually to combat the effects of invasive plants.

Fortunately, using native plants when planting and gardening is a growing trend among developers and landscapers. Nursery owners are stocking up on native plants to meet the demand for them by homeowners. These excellent websites will help you identify invasive plants and suggest native alternatives:

Growing Native: www.growingnative.org

U.S. National Arboretum: www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/invasives.html

Virginia Native Plant Society: www.vnps.org/invasive.html

★ ★ FAIRFAX COUNTY'S FOUR-STAR TRAIL MIX ★ ★

*There's a long, long trail a-winding, Into the land of my dreams... Stoddard King**

Year round, even on cold mornings in the misty spring, at the crack of dawn and under the watchful gaze of deer, folks can be seen on our local trails. Very few communities in the United States can claim more than 200 miles of trails for its citizens (with plans for more in the works), but Fairfax County can. For almost three decades, visionary Park Authority and county planners have carefully built and maintained a green network of multi-use trails for the enjoyment of fast walkers, slow strollers, the horsey set and ardent cyclists.

While trails are used for a variety of recreational purposes, they also serve the community by providing non-motorized transportation corridors between homes, businesses, parks and Metro stations. Trails also benefit the community as a desirable asset for business and homeowners.



Planning

Considerations in planning a trail include the trail's specific use (e.g., cycling or interpretation of natural resources), and whether it will be part of a park or transportation corridor. Paramount to the planning process, however, is the trail's potential impact on the environment, including adjoining properties. Public input is sought and welcomed in the trail planning process.

Development

Development of the trail starts with its priority ranking. For example, a trail that needs a few gaps filled in without further land acquisition would be ranked higher for development than one for which land needs to be bought or donated. Believe it or not, building a trail costs real money! Building one single mile of trail can cost \$1 million or more. Funding for trails comes from a bond referendum voted upon by citizens, grant support, donations, or "proffered" funds — money from developers that is earmarked for trail development as part of a new or refurbished housing development.

For almost three decades, visionary Park Authority and county planners have carefully built and maintained a green network of multi-use trails for the enjoyment of fast walkers, slow strollers, the horsey set and ardent cyclists.

A lot more goes into planning, building and maintaining a trail than meets the eye. It can take years to get a trail on the ground. Here's a bird's eye view of the process.

Siting

Many factors guide the location of trails, including the following considerations: unique natural and cultural resources, proximity to stream, floodplains, and Resource Protection Areas, soil types, existing vegetation, steepness of slopes, and distance from neighboring properties. These factors are evaluated in order to minimize potential impacts to natural resources and the future management of those resources. The agency uses the *Stewardship Resource Guide: Trails in Natural Areas* to provide guidance on environmental issues.

Design

The design of a trail is meticulous work that takes into account such engineering factors as land slopes, stable soils, appropriate distances from streams and stream crossings. Trail accessibility and amenities are also part of the design process. This includes parking, entrances, information kiosks, water fountains, benches and restrooms.

And that's just getting the trail planned. After it's built, signage and long-term maintenance are also part of the trail mix. Just think about all the signs that are involved for a well-designed trail — nature interpretation, directional signs, trailhead signs, distance markers, trail etiquette — you get the picture!

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**Stoddard King (1889-1933) was a popular songwriter, whose tune "There's a Long, Long Trail" was a favorite during World War I.*

Frying Pan Park's Top Ten

By Todd Brown, Manager

Frying Pan Park is a toe-tapping, hoof-clopping, mooing, oinking, wheat-threshing, hay-riding hoot of a place. The park is a unique, real working farm circa the 1930s that raises produce and farm animals (buy some farm fresh eggs!) smack dab in suburbanized Herndon in western Fairfax County. It's also the home of the 4-H Hoofers and Heifers Livestock Club, an historic site and an equestrian center that features national events. So take a look at Frying Pan's Top Ten and plan your next visit.



1 *"No, son, milk doesn't grow in cartons."*

Here's where families can teach their children a little about how the food on their table gets there. Frying Pan Park features Kidwell Farm, which preserves the era of 1920-1950, when family dairy farms dotted the American countryside. Corn, wheat and hay are grown in the fields, and the barns are filled with farm animals including cows, sheep, goats and chickens.

There's a 1930s farmhouse and the outbuildings include the dairy, smokehouse, corn cribs, equipment sheds, chicken coop, outhouse and various run-in sheds for livestock.

2 *Old Tractors that Really Work and a Blacksmith Shop*

The Antique Equipment Shed houses horse-drawn and tractor-powered equipment, including several early tractors such as a 1900 Fordson, a John Deere and a Farmall which are maintained in working order. The Moffett Blacksmith Shop, circa 1917, originally located in the nearby town of Herndon, stands at the farm entrance across from the kitchen garden.

Frying Pan's incredible volunteer staff occasionally help man the forge of the fully operational blacksmith and wheelwright shop.



3 *"Mom, dad, let's go on a hayride!"*

At Frying Pan Park, you can treat your crowd to a 20-minute hayride through the field and woodlands, and then visit the Country Store (history buffs — this is for you). The Country Store is housed in the Vocational Agriculture Building of the 1920 Floris Vocational Technical



High School. The building was used as a shop class by the high school boys.

The Country Store offers unique, old-fashioned toys, tractors, games and decorative items. Candy, cold drinks and ice cream are for sale, too, just like in the old days.

4 *Horses (but not for rent!)*

Frying Pan Park is home to a number of national and regional equestrian events and features facilities for show and practice. The Activities Center has an indoor riding arena 110 feet by 235 feet with a sand-base floor, spectator seating for 800, two outdoor riding rings with all-weather footing, and more than three miles of cross-country trails for riders. Jump equipment and over 150 semi-enclosed stalls complete the facilities. But that's not all, you can also meet the park's two draft horses, Jesse and Michael, that help out with the farming.



5 *No school? Come down to the farm for Camps, Tours and Classes*



Just think. You're a child that's been sitting still all year and now you're out of school! What could be better than a day camp on the farm, enjoying farm activities, meeting the animals, learning about farm equipment, and milking cows and goats. Well, Frying Pan's got it. The park also features scouting programs, school tours and pre-school classes.

6 *Baby Animals*

Every year, beginning in late February through April, the staff at Kidwell Farm at Frying Pan Park posts on its website the birthing schedule for the farm animals. This year there are babies galore, a bumper crop of lambs, kids (the real word for baby goats), and calves. Bring the little ones (and big ones) to Kidwell Farm to see the babies. Viewing hours at Kidwell Farm are daily from 9am to 5pm.



7 4-H Fair, Music, Farm Demonstrations and Special Programs All Year Long

Check the website to see what's happening on Frying Pan's busy calendar. FPP has so many delightful special events, you may want to make its website your home page. Special events include horse shows, farm demonstrations such as Dairy Day, Farm Baby Day, or Sheep and Wool Day, holiday celebrations, history programs, Farmers Market Wednesday mornings, a mid-summer Flea Market, and the year-round always-wonderful Acoustic Jam, where folks bring their



instruments to the country store for some strummin' and listenin'.

An informal Acoustic Jam is held at the Country Store the first and third Sunday of each month, 1-4 pm. Bring an instrument and do drop in!

8 Welcome, Ellmore Farm at Frying Pan Park

Once it was a dairy barn. After that, it became a church sanctuary, then a visitor center and auditorium. Estimated to be nearly 120 years old, this sturdy structure will begin serving the needs of Frying Pan staff and visitors later this year. The main barn floor, where cows used to munch their grain while waiting to be milked, will now offer auditorium space with seating for 200. Still under development, there are many needs this building may fulfill including exhibit space, offices, collections storage and programs.

9 Trails and Wildflowers

Although much of the woodlands that used to surround Frying Pan Park have given way to developments, the park still retains precious acres of forest which feature trails, streams, wild flowers, century-old oak trees and a small waterfall. Here, the woodland animals — fox, weasels, hawks, snakes and groundhogs — need to co-exist with their farm counterparts, and their suburban neighbors.



10 Pre-Civil War Americana

Stroll around the restored Frying Pan Meeting House, a former Baptist Church where blacks — both freemen and enslaved — and whites worshiped together. Plus, Kidwell Farm House is filled with antique house furnishings, while the equipment shed houses antique farm equipment.

PLUS...The Chore Crew and More!

Frying Pan Park's incredible staff is joined by scores of super volunteers of all ages and vast knowledge who love spending time on the farm. One of Frying Pan's unique volunteer crews is the Chore Crew, consisting of school kids that do farm chores at the park after school. This is so popular, there is a waiting list for youth volunteers. If you would like to become part of this remarkable volunteer team, call or email Erin at erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov, 703-324-8750.



FRYING PAN PARK is located at 2709 West Ox Road in Herndon, Virginia. For more information call the park at 703-437-9101 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fpp

- ▶ Frying Pan Park: open daily dawn to dusk
- ▶ Kidwell Farm: open daily 9am-5pm
- ▶ Hayrides: 10am-4:30pm, March to November (*call to confirm*)
- ▶ Country Store: 10 am-4:30pm, March to December
- ▶ Activity Center: hours vary; please call 703-437-9101
- ▶ Riding facilities are open Monday through Wednesday from 8am-9pm and Thursday through Sunday from 8am-4:30pm.



Learn how your company or employer can support the parks
at www.fairfaxcountyparkfoundation.com



The Goods on Geese

by Meghan Fellows, Naturalist

Sometimes I like to take my dog (on his leash, plastic baggies in pocket) to county parks that I don't get to visit that often. Being relatively new to the area, I enjoy seeing the geese and hearing their musical honks as they fly in formation.

Geese are beautifully adapted creatures that fly hundreds of miles every year. Some subspecies have even come back from the brink of extinction. However, I like to watch them pull grass and underwater plants as they gather their required four pounds of food every day. Sitting and enjoying them as they do what they do best — hearing that soft rip and crunch of their feeding habits — is a restful experience.

Recently, my dog and I weren't the only visitors to the park, nor the only visitors interested in the geese. Several people stopped to throw bread to them. Unfortunately, a lot of people don't realize that adding a lot of bread to their diets isn't healthy for them.

When another visitor threw down more bread for the flock, I decided it might be easier to scare the geese away. As we walked closer to the geese...well, this was not a pleasant experience. Geese can produce one to two pounds of waste every day. As it hadn't rained in a few days, and there were at least 40 geese in this flock, goose

poop was everywhere. But is it really better after a rain? All that waste washing into the creeks and streams increases the bacteria (yes geese have *E. coli* too) and nitrogen levels all the way to the Chesapeake Bay.

As my dog and I approached the flock, I was startled that the geese did not move, nor did they honk nor flap their wings. The geese have become so accustomed to people (and dogs!) that they have lost their fear of natural predators. Luckily, my leashed dog was not smart enough to realize that a free meal was inches from his teeth, but how many encounters have ended so peacefully?

Feeding wildlife in the parks is against park policy and for good reasons:

- ✎ It creates unhealthy animals (for example, normal geese would never let dogs walk among them);
- ✎ It causes an extraordinary amount of animal waste in human use areas, usually where people feed them, and
- ✎ It costs park staff time and effort as they work hard to clean up the mess and make the park presentable.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS



The Canada Goose is a widely variable species, with some 36 subspecies recognized by some authorities. The typical goose population will migrate seasonally, but in the past 10 years or so, urban open spaces have created ideal places for geese to spend the winter. Manicured lawns next to ponds or fountains provide ideal grounds for geese to breed (as many as 12 goslings, or young, a year)! The absence of normal predators means that geese can quickly overwhelm the natural capacity (the amount of food and habitat available) of an area.

1. On average they lay five eggs per nest, although it may take over 24 hours to lay one egg.
2. Canada Geese are monogamous and form family bonds; the female will sit on the nest to keep the eggs warm while the male stands guard.
3. It takes a month for a goose egg to hatch.
4. It is against the rules to feed the Canada Geese (and for that matter any wildlife in the parks).
5. A male goose (a gander) can deliver a blow sufficient to ward off a fox or a human.
6. There are now over three to four million Canada Geese in the U.S.
7. The largest Canada Goose has a wingspan of up to six feet.
8. Goslings can swim within one day of hatching.

More information: www.gpnc.org/canada.htm
www.fw.umn.edu/research/goose/html/default.html
www.kidzone.ws/animals/birds/canada-goose.htm

Preserve, Protect, Play WRISTBANDS

***We love the new green awareness wristbands
now being offered by the Fairfax County Park Foundation.***



The wristbands read "Preserve, Protect, Play" and will be sold for \$2.00 each at locations throughout the Park Authority including RECenters, golf courses and historic site gift shops. When you buy one, you will be helping to turn dreams into reality by supporting valuable natural resource and cultural preservation projects, along with increasing awareness of the Park Foundation. Here are just two examples of the many projects your wristband will support:

- The final phases of construction of Clemyjontri Park, the first fully accessible park in the county where children with and without disabilities can play side-by-side.
- Awareness and funding for Bright Futures, the Foundation's campaign to provide 850 scholarships to summer camp for at-risk kids in Fairfax County.
- Archaeological research at Civil War sites.



Bulk orders of 10 or 100 can be ordered on the Foundation website at www.fairfaxcountyparkfoundation.com.

For more information, please contact Bob Brennan, the Executive Director of the Park Foundation at 703-324-8581, robert.brennan@fairfaxcounty.gov

The mission of Fairfax County Park Foundation is to strengthen the connection between the citizens of the county and our parks by creating innovative partnerships that provide funding for: preservation of our open spaces, improvement of our parks, trails, and recreational facilities, restoration of our historic sites and nature centers, and advocacy for quality parks and open space in Fairfax County.

Happy 3,000!

The Cultural Resource Management and Protection Section reached a new and impressive milestone. They recently recorded their 3,000th archaeological site with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Fairfax County has identified and recorded more archaeological sites than any other county in Virginia. The 3,000th site, known as the Callow Site, is a prehistoric site discovered by John Callow at Riverbend Park.

Congratulations to John and the team in Cultural Resource Protection!

Trails continued from page 5

Landscape architect Jenny Pate, who is trails coordinator for the Park Authority, has led the charge over the past five years to create the Fairfax County Cross County Trail — all 40 miles of it.

The Fairfax County Cross County Trail (CCT) provides a connection between the Occoquan River near Route 123 in the south to the Potomac River at Great Falls in the north. When completed, the CCT will be close to 40 miles long. The CCT route connects three major stream valleys and greenways: Pohick Creek, Accotink Creek and Difficult Run. The CCT is primarily on Fairfax County parkland, but also is routed through other public land, private property and along sidewalks. The CCT is a result of a joint effort between the county and volunteer organizations to resolve trail issues and volunteer construction or maintenance projects.



“As the Cross County Trail nears completion at the end of this year,” Pate observes, “we will see the result of a lot of hard work by a lot of people — volunteers and staff alike. It is really exciting that soon it will be possible to hike from one end of the county to the other. The trail is a valuable part of the trail system in Fairfax County.”

TRAILBLAZING PARTNERSHIPS

If you would like to be a Fairfax County trailblazer, you may want to volunteer at a Fairfax County Nature center, or join one of the following groups that have been integral to the planning and implementation of the CCT and other trails.

- 🌿 Fairfax County, call Erin Chernisky at 703-324-8750
- 🌿 Fairfax Trails and Streams (FTAS), www.fairfaxtrails.org
- 🌿 Great Falls Trail Blazers (GFTB), www.geocities.com/greatfallstrails
- 🌿 Hunters Valley Riding Club, 703-620-4689
- 🌿 Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE) www.more-mtb.org
- 🌿 Washington Area Bicyclist Association, www.waba.org

Trail concerns and considerations are also coordinated with the County Non-Motorized Transportation Committee (NMTC).

“Existing Trails” maps are available from the Fairfax County Publications Center located at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 156, Fairfax, VA 22035. Hours: 8:15a.m. to 4:15p.m., Monday through Friday, 703-324-2974. You can also look at or download trails map quadrants by going to fairfaxcounty.gov/nmtc/maps.html. However, these are very large files (you’ll need to zoom in on a specific neighborhood in order to read it on screen.) Maps of several existing Park Authority trails — including portions of the Cross County Trail — are also available at Park Authority Headquarters (4th floor of the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax), or by calling or emailing Jenny Pate, 703-324-8726, jenny.pate@fairfaxcounty.gov.

New Foot Trail and Bridge at Hidden Pond Nature Center

Hidden Pond Park, which is 25 acres, lies adjacent to the much larger Pohick Stream Valley Park, which boasts over 700 acres. The two parks are surrounded by thousands of neighbors that would have access to Hidden Pond but for one problem; the Pohick Creek runs through it. The creek presented an obstacle to half of the surrounding communities.

However, a brand new 2000-foot trail and bridge has changed all that, so that many more folks can enjoy the nature center as well as the pond, streams, wetlands, woods and other quiet places that the park has to offer. Nature hates a straight line, so some curves were designed into the trail, beautifully fitting into the landscape. The neighbors seem to be happy with the trail, and recently, the Immanuel Christian Day School of Springfield generously planted 100 redbud tree saplings in the disturbed areas (Thank you!). The springtime show, in just a few years, should be spectacular.

Jim Pomeroy
Manager, Hidden Pond Park





The Community Wildlife Habitat Gardeners of Hidden Pond Park

Since it opened in 1978, Hidden Pond Nature Center has always been a favorite place to visit for families in the Springfield area. Trails, streams, exhibits, and a pond have provided joy and exploration. But by the year 2000, invasive vines and other unwanted plants had taken over the area in front of the nature center. It was during that summer that the Community Wildlife Gardeners of Hidden Pond came to the rescue. With vision and lots of hard work, they transformed the area, and continue to make it better and better.

Some of their gardening triumphs include the design and planting of an attractive herb garden and a rain garden (that has been adopted by Girl Scout Troop 816). A nectar feeder garden has been started, drawing crowds of butterflies, and more shrubs, ferns and rescued plants have been added to the shade garden. As part of their design, more park benches are now enjoyed by visitors. In recognition of their efforts, Hidden Pond's Community Wildlife Garden has been certified as an official Backyard Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

The Wildlife Habitat Gardeners meet in the garden for work parties throughout the growing season to plan and tend their gardening and public education projects. For example, they have developed materials for visitors on creating wildlife habitats and their importance. They are well on their way to making the garden a true "community" project with the help of dedicated volunteers, scouts, neighborhood families, and organizations donating plants and project funds.

The Community Wildlife Habitat Gardeners are hoping you will join them.

If you would like to learn more or become part of this happening crew, call or email Jim Pomeroy at 703-451-9588, james.pomeroy@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Spark Curiosity in Old Places and Green Spaces

Volunteer at a Fairfax County nature center or historic site.

Contact Erin.Chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov, 703-324-8750 for more information

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or: subscribe through our website at
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources

WELCOME TO ResOURCES ONLINE

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources

Our newly renovated website, representing the Resource Management Division (RMD) of the Park Authority and ResOURCES newsletter, is now online and ready for you.

On the website, you can learn more about RMD's work to protect, preserve and interpret Fairfax County's natural and cultural heritage. You can **Visit the Sites** to see the county's beautiful nature centers and historical sites, or stop by the charming **Rental Properties** to plan your next special event. One of our many new features is **Who Do You Call?** for concerns about encroachment, wildlife, county artifacts and more. In **Nature Finder**, find out where to see county birds and flora, visit the **Wildflowers**, or check the **Almanac** for natural and astronomical events. Past issues are available for ResOURCES newsletter, along with dozens of articles about county nature, history and horticulture in the **Articles Index**.

Children's Day Celebration

HIDDEN OAKS NATURE CENTER
703-941-1065
Saturday, April 30th, 1-4:30 pm.

Enjoy games, crafts and demonstrations of activities honoring children from around the world. Celebrate the diversity of Fairfax County during this family fun event. Reservations and advanced payment required. (3-12 yrs.) All children must be accompanied by an adult. \$4

Sheep and Wool Day

KIDWELL FARM
AT FRYING PAN PARK
703-437-9101
May 14th, Saturday, 10am-3pm

Watch sheep getting sheared, wool spinning and other wool demonstrations. Participate in hands-on farm activities and get an up-close introduction to the lambs.

\$3/person (Wool from FPP sheep available for purchase.)

The Power of Flour, A Historic Mill Symposium

COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE
703-759-2771
Monday, April 18th, 9am-3:30pm

A day of information-packed lectures on milling history and foodways, a grinding demonstration at Fairfax County's award-winning 19th century water-powered gristmill, and a hands-on session on working with elementary-aged children and simple machines.

COST: \$40, includes box lunch. Pre-paid reservation by April 15. Visa and Mastercard accepted.



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